

[E. L. Murphy]

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FOLKSTUFF - RANGE LORE SONGS & RHYMES - SQUARE DANCE CALLS

Gauthier. Sheldon F,

Rangelore.

Tarrant Co.,. Dist.,. #7 10/27/37 [57?]

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E. L. Murphy, 65, living at 116 [ahey?] St, Fort Worth, Texas, was born in Travis County, Texas, August 25th, 1872.

We was reared on a farm and learned to ride a horse at an early age. At the age of twenty he secured employment with the Graham Ranch, which ranged about [?] head on an open range.

About ten years of his life was spent working as a cowboy, then he returned to farming and [?] in that vocation until he retired in 1932.

He married [Mandy?] Berry, in 1880. They reared seven children. Two of them are living in Fort Worth and the others are at various localities.

E.L. Murphy, came to Fort Worth, in 1932. He has since made his home with [??] son [?].
E. Murphy.

His life's story follows:

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"My life as a cowhand began when I was 20 years old, down in Travis County, 12 [miles?] West of Austin. There is [?] I was born, August 25th, 1872, on [?] farm [??] [?] my life, with the exception of 10 years [??] worked as a cow hand and since I came to Fort Worth, which [?] in 1932.

"I learned to ride a hoss at [????] [?] at my native home during the days of my youth. If you wished to [?] to some place those days, you either [?] your axles, [?] hoofed it, or rode a hoss.

"I hit up the big auger, Mr Graham, owner of the [?] outfit, for a job when I was 20 years old. That was [?] 1892. I was a [?] than, of [?????] [?] was. The ramrod sized me up for a [???] started to chin. I was [?] big enough to [????] C12 - Texas 2 with a awitch, six foot two and weighted 200 pounds and there was no tallow on my bones.

The big auger gets through looking at me and starts to chin. He asked me:

"Are yo' a cowhand".

"Never worked for [array?] an outfit, but lived on a farm all my life an' rod rode hosses, also handlin' critters has been part of my work", I chined back at him.

"Well, you don't look like a knothed. I can use a cowhand so you can nest here for a spell. [?] you got gravel in [?] gizzard?" He [?] at me.

"Full of it", I shot back and I was givin' him the straight, nothing' was too tough for this Irish lad then.

"He called to the top screw ad told him to show me my remuda. There were six hosses in the string. That [????] [????] starts to shoot gab, [?]' about the [??] gave [?] the [?] that a buckskin, [????], would be the [?] critter to ride first, because he was [?] to a tee and would give me a chance to get my seat warm. [?] sez, "that critter is dead, but has just failed to

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lay down. You can [?] your tree on him now, as I have a little [?] for a couple [?]' hands to make”.

“I calculated that the old alkali was [?] to [?] off in [?] shape by suggestin' a well busted hoss. So, I hoofed it for my tree, I had fetched my [?] it [?] buckskin. By the time I had the critter hitched, all the other hands were located on the op'ra house. They were 3 sitting' on the top rail of the corral like a [?] of buzzards watchin' a carcass.

“I mounted that hoss and he showed me the fifth ace, pronto. I did not expect it, so was not sit. That hoss elevated [?] when he did he gave a couple wiggles, just to get started right, an' when he came down he hit the ground hard an' I was sittin' back of the tree. Before I could [shpe?] myself he was gone again and that time I landed on his [?], the next elevation landed me on the ground.

“The rawhides on the [?] were as [?] [?]. They had [?] right there and then was when I had to put an another [?] [?] show that my gizzard contained gravel.

“I then knew that the top-screw had [?] out the [?] in the remuda instead of a [?] critter, but [?] decided to [?] hoss for the benefit [?] the [?] crowd. [?] smeared the critter again an' mounted him. I was ready/ for him that whirl and' he [?]. He had all the tricks from a straight pitch to the [?]', but I stayed with him [?] grabin' leather a couple times. Well, I took [?] sliver linin' of his cloud an' [?] by [?] [?] make him take it. [?] settled down he was a good saddle.

“[?] op'ra house an' squeezed around me, the ramrod [?]. They told me the hoss was pure snake blood and that he had branded 4 one man for the eternal range. The big auger sez, “Boy you'll make a rawhide”.

“That infor' made me swell up like a [carbncle?], because I had rode a hoss with a notch in his tail. Yas sir, they told me that he had fot got one man. The boys then took me to the [?] house an' showed me the crum incubator, I was then nested.

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"The ranch was, what the cowman called a one hoss outfit, because we only run 1000 head, also, we were called a grease pot outfit, because we packed the grub with a mule, instead of a chuck wagon.

"My first job was bushwackin', that is hunting' critters in the brush that had strayed. The ramrod's first instructions were to be sure that he 'G', which was his brand, was on the critters that I drifted in with. We chined that his outfit was pure an' that all the cowmen in his section of the range was pure, an' it was a [feat?], we had no trouble [?] critters to brand blotters.

"Befor I quit the outfit I had done everything', The job that hit my fancy the best was cuttin' out. The one that I detested was night ridin'.

"I had a wise cutting hoss. The cuttin' hoss must be a pegger an' is the to hoss of the range. To give you an idea what my hoss could do will chin about in a moment. In peggin' he could turn on a dime an' do it like a flash of sky lighten. The [riderworking?]' with pi-bald, that was the kind a 'name of the hoss, could be a knothed. It knew all the tricks of cuttin' out 5 an' could do so better than any man. All I had to do was to pick the critter for him and he does the rest. We had two cuttin' out seasons, in the spring for the calf branding an' in the fall it was the sale critters. Following the cuttin' of the sale critters the drive started.

"The drive is hard work an' takes lots of paitents. The first day we gave the critters all the drag they could take to get the herd as far away from the home range as possible. After that we let the herd graze an' drift an' they mad about seven miles a day. We always worked tow hands in the lead an' the others worked the flanks. The number used on the flanks [???] in the herd. We used one hand to each two hundred.

"Our greatest fretin' was over the critters stampeding'. Critters are more prone to stampede on the drive, because they are in strange territory. Anything that will put fear in any one

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critter can start the romp. A cat, skunk or any vermin runing into the heard [wan?] start the rampage. A bad strom, with lighten hitting close, hail to the cowhand was about as welcome as an ulcerated tooth. A storm without lighten, or hail, [willl?] put the herd to drifting.

“When a stampede starts it takes a a cowboy, that is one a man with guts an' a hoss, to take the lead. The lead hand must try an' force the leading critters to the right, or left. He must ride well to the front an' partly to the side. If hoss goes down, that rider is then branded for the eternal range, because he will be stomped to death. The job that must be 6 done is to get the herd milling. That is running in a circle. Then to take the fear out of the out of the critters all the hands would sing, holler or make some kind of noise to get their minds on the noise. If the hands failed then there would be several days spent brush bustin' hunting the critters.

“During the spell [?] with the outfit we were always lucky on the drive, not one stampede did we have, but we had it on the range. Towards the later part of my spell on that range the market cattle were shiped. I acted a bull nurse on one trip.

“How did we live? Well, on the drive the chuck wagon carried the chuck. The bellie-cheater would have chow ready befor daylight in the morning. He he would yell, “come an' get yo'r hell”, about the break of day. Some times he would yell, “washup snakes an' come to it”. When he yelled that we always calculated that he had a fair to middelin' dish of nourishment shaped up. On the drive the bellie-cheater was hard put at times to shape the chuck proper, because of the fuel. The drive was always in the fall an' we had, more or less, wet spells of weather. The cooky depended on cowchips an' mesquit for fuel an' that don't fire good when wet. He use to keep the [chonce?] loaded when fuel was handy, but it did not hold a great deal an' at times he ran short. So that you tenderfoots may know what a coonie is I shall explain it. It was a cowhide streached under the wagon an' used to carry wood or any other thing the bellie=cheater wanted to use it for. We snaked for dinner an' had supper after the herd bedded 7 down.

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"Our food run strong to whistle berries, they were the red Mexican varity of beans. They were good food and fine while on the drift or the on the range, but while in camp- not so good. In the dog house it became whiffy on the Lee side at times. Next in line was son-of-a-gun stew, it was made of everything/ but the hide an' horns of the critter, but our cheater slipped in a horn at times, [we?] so accused him of it. We always had a good supply of sop, which was made out of bacon grease, flour, water an' a little pepper an' salt. "here was always a good supply of lick, either of the black molasses or sorghum brand. [But?] of the [sorghum?] an' bacon [greas?] we made our Charley Taylor. The only butter we ever saw was the Texas brand, that was the good old bacon grease. Now, you understand that we always had all the meat we call for. The yearlings were handy and also antelope. The blak coffee was always ready when we wanted a tin full. The bread was sourdough gun wadding an' often we were treated to saddle blankets. You greeners call it griddle cakes.

"The chuck was plain rough food, but good. The cowhands always had plenty of leaf lard on their ribs.

"I have often been chined about the cowhand's big hat and other dress. The greeners ask, 'Why do the cowboy wear such a big hat?' Well, the answer is simple. The Texas sun required it.

[?], if a person is going to stay out in it. The Texas cowhand was as sad as a hounds eye if he was without a good conk cover. He often paid a months wages, an' that was around 8 \$30., for a John B. let a cowhand have a good sombrero to slosh on his conk an' then he was as happy as a lost soul when hell is flooded. It was the same with his boots, he wanted the best. Ten dollars an' [?] was the usual price paid for the hand made boot. Most of our outfit wore the [eewee?] boot, that was the short top style.

"The conk cover, boots, saddle an' his personal hoss was what the cowhand dotted on. He wanted a full stamped saddle, a hoss as beautiful as a heart flush, with such an' when properly rigged out, he was ready to [?] sally-hooten and when that gal saw him she was

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easy to chin with. Without the proper rigging the cowhand felt like the frazzled and of a misspent life.

“We hands on the Graham outfit had our good times, but not like a lot of the boys who went to town an' lickered up. We had our sprees going to shin-digs. When a shin-dig was held any place within fifty miles of our nest we took it in. We would rig up in our Sundy-go-to-meetin' fixings and hit the trail.

“The hoe-downs were always hell in the Bull's [manch?]. the furniture would be moved out to give room for the stompers. There always was a bit feed for the boys so they could satisfy there their tapeworm. The dals gals , all shaped up in there go-Easter's, would be scarce, at most of the shin-digs an' so as to fill up the space some of the boys would have to take the heifer brand an' dance lady fashion.

“I was called on to do the prompting, that is call the 9 the dance an' here is one of the many [?] to the stompers, also used to quiet the critters on a stampede. “Chase the possum, chase the [?] Chase the pretty gal 'round the room How'll swap an' how'll yo' [?] This pretty gal for that old maid Yo' swing me an' I'll swing [?] An' we'll go to haven on the same old mule”.

“I quit the ranch life in 1902 and went back to farming. I stayed with the farm until 1932, at which time I came to Fort Worth.

“I married Mandy Berry, in 1880. We reared seven children. My wife died in 1927. I now live with my son and have retired from active work.

“I have given you my knowledge about [??] and as much of the lingo as I can remember. [He?] had a language suited to his business and it was fitting.